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July 16, 2004

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
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"To enrich lives through effective and caring service"

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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From: David Sanders, Ph.D. 
Director, Department of Children and Family Services

Michael J. Henry 
Director of Personnel

EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVES FOR EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH

On March 25, 2003, your Board instructed the Directors of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to develop an employment incentive package that would include, but not be limited to, employment counseling and training services, transportation expenses, clothing allowances and vendor gift certificates to assist emancipated foster youth with their job search.

Since that time, we have joined our efforts to develop an employment incentive package with efforts to encourage pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth to file for County examinations. We have also designed a Youth Career Development Program (attached is the proposed program description). Implementation of this program is still in the planning phase. The number of youth that interested Departments can serve and program funding has not been finalized.

Human Resources continues to monitor entry-level exams open to the public and notifies the DCFS Emancipation Services Division when exams are available. In turn, Emancipation Services staff provide assistance to foster youth in completing and submitting applications. Emancipation Services also provides DHR with a listing of

youth who have applied for exams, and verification of Independent Living Program (ILP) eligibility status if required. DHR tracks the youth through the various stages of the exam process and reports any issues to DCFS. DHR also continues to take the lead in coordinating and organizing an annual Foster Youth Career Fair and Resource Expo within the Fifth District.

Last year, DCFS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) for the development and overall administration of the Foster Youth Independent Living Skills Enhancement Program to provide vocational employment training and/or pre-employment workshops for youth referred by DCFS. On October 1, 2003, contracted providers began to service youth by providing job preparation workshops, academic enrichment, and training in areas such as clerical, cashiering, and basic computer operations. At this point, over 500 youth have been served through this program.

In addition to the Skills Enhancement Program, the following services for eligible youth are funded by DCFS through its annual ILP allocation:

- Interview clothing and work uniforms, utilizing vouchers and gift certificates for such retail stores as: JC Penny, T. J. Maxx, Sears, Target, Wal-Mart, and Ross;
- Work related transportation (e.g., municipal transit passes and tokens); and,
- Tuition for accredited vocational schools.

We look forward to our continuing work with the Department of Community and Senior Services to develop opportunities for our former foster youth and enhance their employability.

If you have any questions, please contact either of us or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, DCFS Board Liaison at (213) 351-5530 or Sandra Blaydow, Human Resources Manager, at (213) 351-8945. Thank you.

DS:MJH
SWB:AM:vi

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Sheriff, Los Angeles County
Chief Deputy Director, Department of Community and Senior Services
Interim Director, Internal Services Department
Director, Department of Public Works
Treasurer and Tax Collector

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"



Proposed Youth Career Development Program For Emancipated Foster Youth

Youth transitioning from foster care to independence have a great need for quality services and support to assist with their education, employment, housing, health and mental health care needs, etc.

Pilot departments interested in exploring a Youth Career Development Program are the Sheriff's Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector.



The departments will identify the number of participants they are able to both mentor and train. Youth will be given direct exposure to job opportunities within these departments and guided in education and training to help ensure future success in permanent employment.

Modeled after the Internal Services Department's successful program, the pilot departments will offer temporary employment in a 12-month paid on-the-job training program or a training assignment in one of a variety of entry level jobs.

The Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) Emancipation Services Division will prescreen the youth and refer them to the pilot departments. The pilot departments will interview and select from the pool of candidates. Successful completion of the program will prepare the youth to compete for entry level jobs in the area in which they have received training.

Minimum Requirements

The minimum eligibility requirements for participants are:

- Must be an emancipated foster youth
- Must be a minimum age of 17 years old to apply (18 at time of hire)
- Must be a current or past participant in the Independent Living Program (ILP) as a foster youth sponsored by the DCFS
- Must be pre-screened by DCFS
- Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. certificate
- Have the ability to perform essential duties of the job class
- Must demonstrate good communication skills
- Must be a U.S. citizen or non-citizen eligible to work for the County

Program Goals



- To expose the participant to the knowledge and skills necessary to enter significant career paths, such as building crafts, information technology, food services and clerical administration.
- To assist participants by promoting the development of good work habits and to teach them how to succeed in the work environment.
- To entrust qualified youth to complete a 12-month training program

Mentors

Mentors are critical to the success of the program. Mentors are County employees who are recommended by managers and who volunteer their services.

Each participant is assigned a mentor at the beginning of the program. Mentors will be carefully matched to support participants through the 12-month period.

The mentor's essential role is to provide personal assistance and support to their youth. Mentors serve primarily as counselors and friends who will encourage and help direct youth to try new strategies, solve problems and ask questions. It is recommended that mentors work with their youth a minimum of twice a month.

Program Funding

Pilot departments will fund all program costs (as necessary, DCFS may cover the costs for uniforms and tools if funding is available). All participants will be employed on a full-time shift basis with a 5/40, 9/80, or 4/40 work schedule.

Program Phases

- Entry Phase – This phase involves all aspects of the program implementation such as identifying how many slots can be funded, recruitment, interviewing, selection, final placement of youth and orientation.
- Participation Phase – This phase requires close monitoring in various areas of the program such as attendance, training, mentoring, evaluations and feedback, payroll processing and issuance of paychecks.

A key component of this phase is ongoing performance measures which are practiced throughout the 12-month period, e.g., monthly participant performance evaluations, quarterly performance reviews, meetings with supervisors and mentors, and site visits.

- Exit Phase – This phase includes transitional planning, identifying possible positions and/or budgeted vacancies in same department or Open Competitive exams run by other County departments.